

\* I have been personally affected financially because I have not been able to sell my horses due to the excess of horses.  
Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, members of the committee.

SENATE AGRICULTURE

EXHIBIT NO. 25

DATE 3-12-09

BILL NO. HB 418

1. My name is Sheena Brake, I live outside of Bozeman. Our family has a ranch in Rosebud County, where I was raised. We raised horses there for ranch use. I have a mare I raised a couple of nice colts out of, but a couple of years ago, I realized there was bad things coming for the horse market due to pressures from animal rights groups, coupled with myself being in college, and decided to quit raising colts.
2. I decided to turn this mare into a riding horse. I use my horses for ranch work, trail riding, worked as a dude wrangler for cattle drives for several years, and at the time was playing polo for MSU.
3. I paid \$700 to have this mare professionally trained. The same week I got her back from the trainer, I found out I was going to have a baby. I soon realized I would not be able to safely ride a green broke horse, and could not continue to buy hay and pay pasture rent to the tune of \$200 per month while going to college or have time to ride the horse after I had the baby and continue college, work, and raise a baby.
4. I felt that an auction sale was out of the question for this mare. She had a great build, great disposition and great potential, but I couldn't trust that she wouldn't be sold as a canner, and it feared that if she was, sold as a canner since the U.S. processing facilities were shut down, she would be shipped to Mexico or Canada, where I didn't feel she would be humanely treated. If such was the fate for her here in Montana, I would have been fine with that. Livestock is livestock. That doesn't mean I don't stop me from caring about her and taking care of her, but there is a point where you have to understand they have to be put to another use.

5. In a normal market, without the pressures put on by animal rights people, I would have had no trouble selling her as a riding horse, but people are scared to buy horses right now. I offered to donate her to the equine program at MSU, but was told they were full. I persisted in trying to find a buyer for her. I finally sold her a year later, for \$600. That is after spending \$2400.00 on hay and pasture rent and \$700 for training. So I spent over \$3000 (not counting vaccine/vet costs) for a horse I was paid \$600 for due to loss of market from animal rights activist pressure. I really could have used that money for school and for raising my baby.
6. I am sickened by the non-ending stories of horses abandoned and neglected across the U.S. due to this growing problem. Although I ~~deplore their actions, I can understand how people might feel hopeless and feel they are stuck in the position to do this to horses. I was pretty close to being in that position myself.~~ I think this bill is a step in the right direction for solving this problem.
7. My son Kayden, who just turned a year old, already loves riding horses. I hope this will continue to be an option for him as he gets older.
8. I am glad I live in Montana where people have common sense and understand the agriculture industry. I urge you to support this bill.

Thank you